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7. — *Reports and other Documents relating to the State Lunatic Hospital, at Worcester, Mass.* Printed by Order of the Senate. Boston. 1837. pp. 200.

THE noble institution, of which these documents give the history and results for the first four years of its existence, is the first of a series of public charities, designed for the relief of that hitherto neglected class in this country, the pauper and other lunatics of the poorer classes, under legislative provision. Following the generous example of the State of Massachusetts in founding this institution, many other communities have commenced the good work of providing for their insane, and at the present time no less than seven or eight hospitals are in actual progress towards completion; and from the impulse which the subject has received in most of the States of the confederacy, it is almost certain that in a few years asylums will be opened in every direction.

In the New England States, and New York, there is statistical evidence sufficient to show that there is one person actually insane to every six or seven hundred inhabitants; and to the larger proportion of these, the only hope of restoration, and the greatest measure of comfort and safety to themselves and to society, can only be afforded through the aids of asylums designed for the purpose.

While so much interest is everywhere felt in this subject, this little volume, principally composed of the Annual Reports to the government, which were out of print, affords the means of forming an accurate judgment in relation to most of those points, on which legislators contemplating the foundation of similar institutions would seek information. And it may be regarded as a fortunate circumstance for the cause of the deranged elsewhere, that this first experiment of a State taking charge of the insane of the pauper, and other comparatively little wealthy classes, has from its commencement been conducted with so much judgment and evinced results so successful; — that its popularity at home should have afforded so encouraging an example abroad.

Other public institutions for the insane, many years previous to the foundation of the State Lunatic Hospital, have been carried on with a degree of success probably not surpassed by any in the world; but these have been designed for those classes of society which could return an equivalent for their support, the pauper resting on the public, and the poorer citizen having hitherto remained unprovided for.

From the general recapitulation of the first four years' experience of this hospital, ending in November, 1836, it appears that 510 patients have received its advantages, 198 of whom have been restored, and 28 have died.

With respect to the success of one insane hospital as contrasted with another, any comparison, bearing even an approximation to the truth, is scarcely practicable. We have not a doubt but that the greatest practicable amount of good has been here accomplished; and how the results compare with other institutions, it is hardly worth while to inquire, as such results are materially influenced by many contingencies. The system of receiving, or declining patients according to the character and degree of their insanity, the prospect of their recovery, their age, and general health, all affect the conclusions of any comparative statistics, to an extent beyond what is generally understood. In glancing at the hospitals of Great Britain, for example, some, as Bethlem and St. Luke's, reject all cases of long standing, all in feeble health, all epileptics, and in fact all except those in whom a fair prospect of recovery exists. Other hospitals, as that at Hanwell, under the distinguished superintendence of Sir W. Ellis, receive the rejected of these institutions, (for none are usually allowed to remain in them over a year), and cases of such a hopeless description, that the report of 1836 gives only 33 discharges out of over 700 cases, and it is not specified even if these were recovered. It is evident that no just comparison could be made of these classes of institutions, as far as cures are considered.

At the Massachusetts State Lunatic Hospital, the terms of the law prescribe the subjects for its aids, limiting them to those "so furiously mad" as to be dangerous to go at large. While this gives to its care most of the cases (within those circles of society, which take advantage of its benefits,) where disease is in its high and active state of excitement, (in which, when recent, the hope of cure is greatest,) it also places under its custody all those cases of this description, whether homicidal or otherwise, which, from their long standing, are beyond the hope of recovery. As a balance to this latter unwelcome class, at least so far as recovery is concerned, under the terms of the law, limiting admissions to those dangerous to go at large, the wards of the hospital ought to be saved from those inanimate and often little more than vegetative forms of the imbecile and utterly demented, whose presence year after year reduces the proportionate number of recoveries in most other institutions.

There are still several other circumstances, some of which are inseparable from the nature of the subject, which add to the

indefiniteness and uncertainty of any comparison of different institutions, and render it worthy of very little regard; such as the widely different limit employed at different hospitals to separate the *chronic* and *recent cases*, making an entirely different aspect to the same facts; the impossibility of ascertaining the standing of most cases precisely, the results appearing widely diverse if an individual be counted insane from the first diseased eccentricities and peculiarities presented, or from the outrageous explosion of madness only; the mode of calculating the percentages of cures, before or after deducting the deaths, both of which modes have been adopted; and lastly, the legal right in an institution to retain its subjects until all the means and appliances of moral and medical treatment can be employed, or its necessity of abandoning them prematurely, as is the case in all those institutions in which a current stipend is demanded, to impatient and penurious friends.

With respect to the ratio of mortality, in this hospital at least, no uncertainty can obtain, although in some institutions even this part of statistics cannot always be depended upon, as patients in failing health are not unfrequently returned by the solicitation of friends to die at home. It deserves to be remarked that the ratio of deaths, only 28 in 510, speaks volumes in favor of the general medical skill of the director, the salubrity of the establishment, and the entire safety of the decided and peculiar modes of medication understood to be pursued at this and the other large insane institutions of New England.

As an appendix, a few interesting pages are devoted to a form of alienated mind, which has recently been accurately described in the work of Dr. Prichard, although his views are by no means novel or original. It is that species of mental disease which is evinced in the conduct, and not in conversation; in unimpaired intellect, but perverted moral sense. Abundant specimens of this form of insanity may be seen in any lunatic asylum, or in society at large, and it is frequently presented in civil and criminal trials, where its elucidation forms the stumblingblock of courts and juries. These few pages, which we cannot but regret were not more extended, form no inconsiderable addition to the medical jurisprudence of insanity.

These Reports combine much valuable information in regard to the general construction and management of lunatic asylums. This is also the case in the annual reports of several other institutions, the whole presenting, although in a desultory and impracticable form, a mass of information in regard to the treatment of alienated mind, interesting and valuable in itself, and as peculiar to the American establishments, not to be found in

any written works on the subject. In some future number of this work the attempt may be made to concentrate and combine the important points deduced from the experience of our hospitals, in an article on the Construction and Management of Institutions for the Insane.

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8. — *A Discourse on the Life and Character of the Hon. George Mathews, late Presiding Judge of the Supreme Court of the State of Louisiana.* By the Hon. CHARLES WATTS, at the Request of the Members of the Bar of New Orleans. New Orleans. Benjamin Levy. 1837. 12mo. pp. 15.

THIS is a plain biographical sketch, very little in the style of panegyric. The facts of a life, not eventful, are detailed with modesty and distinctness, if not in a way calculated to produce a strong impression. The subject of the Discourse was a highly respectable judge of Louisiana, who died November 10th, 1836, in the sixty-third year of his age. In 1805, without any solicitation on his part, he was appointed by President Jefferson, judge of the territory of Mississippi, whence he was transferred to the territory of Orleans, in 1806. On the erection of Louisiana into a State, in 1812, he was appointed by Governor Claiborne judge of the Supreme Court of the State of Louisiana, and shortly afterwards, by the resignation of an associate on the bench, took the place of presiding judge. This honorable station he occupied till his death.

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9. — *The Œdipus Tyrannus of Sophocles, with Notes and a Critique on the Subject of the Play.* By J. W. STUART, Professor of Greek and Roman Literature in the College of South Carolina. New York; Gould & Newman. 1837. 12mo. pp. 222.

THE Œdipus Tyrannus is universally acknowledged to be one of the greatest masterpieces of the Athenian stage. In the regularity and perfectness of its plot, the polish of its style, and the appalling developement of its catastrophe, it is eminently calculated to excite the most lively interest of the scholar and the man of taste. It has scenes of passion which Shakspeare has hardly surpassed; touches of pathos and tenderness, in which the deepest feelings of the human heart are most beautifully expressed;